

# Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

## 2020 Annual Report

Volume 2



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

907-274-4692 | 800-478-4692 | [humanrights.alaska.gov](http://humanrights.alaska.gov)



# HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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## Complaint Hotline

907-274-4692 Anchorage Area

800-478-4692 Toll Free

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From left to right: Vice-Chairperson Betsy Engle, Chairperson Debbie Fullenwider, Commissioner Cynthia Erickson, Commissioner Evelyn Falzerano, Commissioner Kyle Foster, and Commissioner William Craig. Not pictured: Commissioner Rebecca Carrillo.

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## COMMISSIONERS

**A. Debbie Fullenwider**, *Chairperson*

**Betsy M. Engle**, *Vice-Chairperson*

**William P. Craig**

**Rebecca N. Carrillo**

**Cynthia M. Erickson**

**Evelyn R. Falzerano**

**Kyle N. Foster**

## COMMISSION STAFF

### Administration/Legal

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*Executive Director*

**Toyia Del Valle**

*Administrative Officer*

**Helen T. Hickmon**

*Human Rights Advocate*

**Carolyn Thomas**

*Paralegal*

**Sarah Bylsma**

*Office Assistant*

**Jennifer Barker**

*Commission Secretary*

### Investigations

**Nanette Gay**

*Investigations Director*

**Antoinette Rust**

*Investigator*

**Breanne Lee**

*Investigator*

**Mark Loper**

*Investigator*

**Donna Nass**

*Investigator*

**Or'Lanthia Lloyd**

*Investigator*

**Jocelyn Thammavongsa**

*Investigator*

Front and rear cover photos courtesy of Ed Boudreau. Mr. Boudreau is a retired Air Force veteran who resides in Eagle River with his wife and son. He is a landscape photographer currently exploring and capturing all the beauty Alaska offers. You can see other works at his gallery on JBER and online at [www.edboudreauphotography.com](http://www.edboudreauphotography.com).

# Assessment of Progress Made Toward Equal Employment Opportunity by Every Department of State Government

Every three years, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights ("ASCHR" or the "Commission") conducts an overall assessment of the progress made toward equal employment opportunity by every department of the executive branch of state government, and as mandated by AS 18.80.060(6), publishes it in the annual report. As noted at the end of Volume 1 of this year's annual report, internal commission data was bifurcated from the statewide assessment in attempting to meet the statutory deadline to present the Commission's annual data. The assessment of statewide data is presented here in Volume 2. Bifurcating the ASCHR annual report gave staff time to review the data and gave respective department leaders the opportunity to address legislative priorities prior to meeting with the Commission's personnel.

Working in conjunction with the state's Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, which also administers the state's Equal Employment Opportunity ("EEO") program, we acquired and analyzed the most recent statistics available at the end of the 2020 fiscal year; this review period covers fiscal years 2018, 2019, and 2020. Although the data is presented in the same format for easy comparison, this year's triennial report includes graphical displays. However, the data breakdown by department remains limited to total employees, minority employees, and female employees. The staff is considering additional data breakdowns for future reports e.g., pay disparities for minorities and females.

Excluding a small increase in 2019, the total amount of state employees slowly decreased over the last three years, for a net reduction of 97 total employees between 2017 and 2020. Minority employees comprised 24.3% of the workforce at the end of FY2020 compared to 22.6% of the state workforce in 2017, a gain of 1.7%. The number of female employees decreased during this assessment period with the state losing 91 female employees, representing a 0.3% decrease from 2017 to 2020. Although females remain underrepresented in some departments, that is not the case when examining the entire executive branch.

Alaska Native and American Indians (collectively "Alaska Native" or "Native") continue to be the

most underrepresented group, losing 0.1% (47 net employees) since 2017, representing 6.7% of the state workforce in 2020. Asian employees decreased from 8.1% in 2017 to 7.7% in 2020, a loss of 0.5%. However, Pacific Islander employees increased from 0.1% in 2017 (16 employees) to 0.6% in 2020 (87 employees), a gain of 0.5%. Additionally, Hispanic employees also increased from 3.6% of state employees in 2017 to 3.9% in 2020, a gain of 0.3%. The percentage of Black employees remained the same at 3.6%. Not surprisingly, as society becomes more racially diverse and individuals identify with more than one race, the percentage of people claiming two or more races jumped from 0.2% of the state employee workforce in 2017 to 1.5% in 2020, a gain of 1.3%.

For comparative baseline data, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>1</sup> provides a greater breakdown of the 2019 civilian non-institutional population, reporting 344,000 Alaskans within the civilian labor force (including both employed and unemployed individuals). Women represent 46.2% of this group with 159,000 female Alaskans working and/or seeking work, while non-white Alaskans working and/or seeking work number 119,000, representing 34.6% of the available Alaskan civilian labor workforce. Asian people in this category are 7.0% (24,000 people), while Hispanic or Latino individuals are 5.8% (20,000 people). The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not provide further racial breakdowns in the 2019 annual averages table as reported for Alaska. The overall minority and female percentage of the Alaska population as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for 2019<sup>2</sup> was 39.8% and 47.9%, respectively.

The staff met with leadership from nearly every department to gain a better understanding of the challenges they face in recruiting and retaining both women and people of color in the workforce.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2019, Table 14 (July 31, 2020), available at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/geographic-profile/home.htm> (last accessed May 6, 2021).  
<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts Alaska (July 1, 2019), available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/AK> (last accessed May 6, 2021).

**Minorities Employed in the Executive Branch of Alaska State Government as of June 30  
Permanent Full-time**

Department Name	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	Total Employees	Minorities	Percentage									
Office Of The Governor	129	30	23.3	124	32	25.8	127	35	27.6	119	29	24.4
Administration	884	225	25.5	1,029	264	25.7	1,026	291	28.4	1,035	306	29.6
Commerce, Community And Economic Development	438	91	20.8	418	92	22.0	455	98	21.5	429	97	22.6
Corrections	1,721	390	22.7	1,717	383	22.3	1,694	389	23.0	1,757	410	23.3
Education And Early Development	251	44	17.5	251	47	18.7	237	45	19.0	236	45	19.1
Environmental Conservation	462	77	16.7	437	82	18.8	432	79	18.3	419	78	18.6
Fish And Game	765	69	9.0	749	72	9.6	760	77	10.1	770	80	10.4
Health And Social Services	2,994	1,017	34.0	2,954	1,032	34.9	2,967	1,063	35.8	2,894	1,000	34.6
Labor And Workforce Development	615	131	21.3	581	128	22.0	559	138	24.7	563	142	25.2
Law	460	83	18.0	452	92	20.4	463	91	19.7	481	97	20.2
Military And Veterans Affairs	244	54	22.1	251	61	24.3	246	68	27.6	233	65	27.9
Natural Resources	612	62	10.1	557	59	10.6	561	65	11.6	549	65	11.8
Public Safety	743	128	17.2	723	127	17.6	743	122	16.4	732	118	16.1
Revenue	468	130	27.8	457	123	26.9	459	132	28.8	434	126	29.0
Transportation And Public Facilities	2,487	471	18.9	2,488	501	20.1	2,519	526	20.9	2,525	550	21.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,273</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>13,188</b>	<b>3,095</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>13,248</b>	<b>3,219</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>13,176</b>	<b>3,208</b>	<b>24.3</b>

**Minorities Employed in the Executive Branch of  
Alaska State Government 2020**

Hispanics Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	560	3.9

Alaska Natives or Native Americans Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	958	6.7

African Americans Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	512	3.6

Asians Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	1,112	7.7

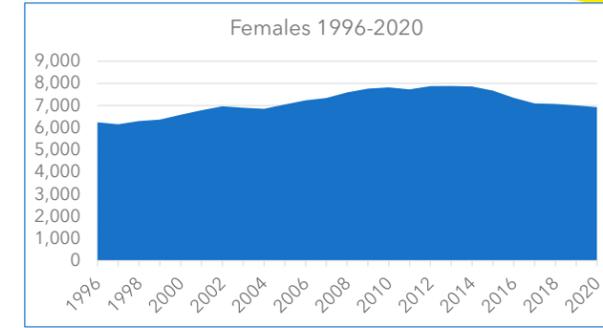
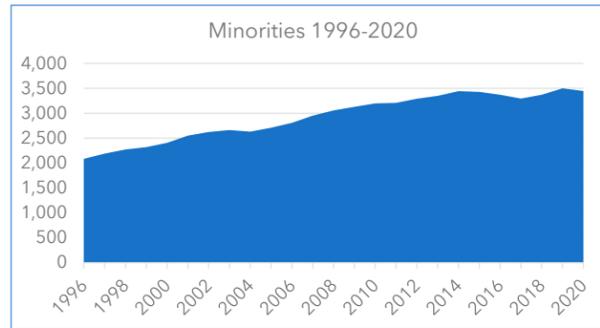
Pacific Islanders or Hawaiians Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	87	0.6

Two or More Races Employed by the State of Alaska 2020		
Year	Number Employed	Percentage of Workforce
2020	218	1.5

**MINORITIES EMPLOYED IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH  
OF ALASKA STATE GOVERNMENT  
Permanent Full-Time  
2017 MONTHLY BASE SALARY**

Salary Range	All Employees in the Salary Range	Percentage of All Employees in the Salary Range	Total Minority Employees in Salary Range	Percentage of Minorities in Salary Range
2,000-2,999	381	2.9	185	1.4
3,000-3,999	1,920	14.5	694	5.2
4,000-4,999	2,863	21.6	732	5.5
5,000-5,999	2,773	20.9	605	4.6
6,000-6,999	2,139	16.1	358	2.7
>6,999	3,197	24.1	428	3.2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13,273</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>22.6</b>

**Minorities and Females Employed by the State of Alaska 1996 - 2020\***



\*Note: Data prior to 2014 was calculated using 12/31 of each year; in the 2017 report, data is calculated using the fiscal year end (FYE) date of 6/30 for each year, beginning with a recalculation of 2014.  
\*\*Permanent Full-time, Permanent Part-time, Permanent Full-time and Part-time Seasonal

**2020 MONTHLY BASE SALARY**

Salary Range	All Employees in the Salary Range	Percentage of All Employees in the Salary Range	Total Minority Employees in the Salary Range	Percentage of Minorities in Salary Range
<2,000	1	0.0	0	0.0
2,000-2,999	221	1.7	107	0.8
3,000-3,999	1,714	13.0	685	5.2
4,000-4,999	2,578	19.6	760	5.8
5,000-5,999	2,609	19.8	632	4.8
6,000-6,999	2,132	16.2	417	3.2
>6,999	3,921	29.8	607	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,176</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,208</b>	<b>24.3</b>

Note: As of June 1, 2020 all State employees were converted to Bi-Weekly pay schedules. The Monthly Base Salary is calculated as follows: Bi-Weekly Pay Period Rate x 26 / 12.

**Females Employed in the Executive Branch of Alaska State Government as of June 30  
Permanent Full-time**

Department Name	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	Total Employees	Females	Percentage									
Office Of The Governor	129	90	69.8	124	88	71.0	127	86	67.7	119	77	64.7
Administration	884	520	58.8	1,029	563	54.7	1,026	558	54.4	1,035	560	54.1
Commerce, Community And Economic Development	438	257	58.7	418	255	61.0	455	263	57.8	429	247	57.6
Corrections	1,721	652	37.9	1,717	649	37.8	1,694	634	37.4	1,757	656	37.3
Education And Early Development	251	160	63.7	251	163	64.9	237	157	66.2	236	161	68.2
Environmental Conservation	462	251	54.3	437	252	57.7	432	249	57.6	419	243	58.0
Fish And Game	765	326	42.6	749	329	43.9	760	340	44.7	770	348	45.2
Health And Social Services	2,994	2,086	69.7	2,954	2,054	69.5	2,967	2,037	68.7	2,894	1,979	68.4
Labor And Workforce Development	615	398	64.7	581	385	66.3	559	363	64.9	563	371	65.9
Law	460	308	67.0	452	303	67.0	463	311	67.2	481	333	69.2
Military And Veterans Affairs	244	84	34.4	251	87	34.7	246	82	33.3	233	78	33.5
Natural Resources	612	291	47.5	557	273	49.0	561	260	46.3	549	268	48.8
Public Safety	743	239	32.2	723	238	32.9	743	258	34.7	732	249	34.0
Revenue	468	291	62.2	457	278	60.8	459	280	61.0	434	263	60.6
Transportation And Public Facilities	2,487	616	24.8	2,488	632	25.4	2,519	640	25.4	2,525	645	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,273</b>	<b>6,569</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>13,188</b>	<b>6,549</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>13,248</b>	<b>6,518</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>13,176</b>	<b>6,478</b>	<b>49.2</b>

**FEMALES EMPLOYED IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH  
OF ALASKA STATE GOVERNMENT  
Permanent Full-time  
2017 MONTHLY BASE SALARY**

Salary Range	All Employees in the Salary Range	Percentage of All Employees in the Salary Range	Total Female Employees in Salary Range	Percentage of Females in Salary Range
2,000-2,999	381	2.9	272	2.0
3,000-3,999	1,920	14.5	1,352	10.2
4,000-4,999	2,863	21.6	1,462	11.0
5,000-5,999	2,773	20.9	1,263	9.5
6,000-6,999	2,139	16.1	944	7.1
>6,999	3,197	24.1	1,276	9.6
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13,273</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,569</b>	<b>49.5</b>

**2020 MONTHLY BASE SALARY**

Salary Range	All Employees in the Salary Range	Percentage of All Employees in the Salary Range	Total Female Employees in Salary Range	Percentage of Females in Salary Range
<2,000	1	0.0	0	0.0
2,000-2,999	221	1.7	161	1.2
3,000-3,999	1,714	13.0	1,188	9.0
4,000-4,999	2,578	19.6	1,382	10.5
5,000-5,999	2,609	19.8	1,177	8.9
6,000-6,999	2,132	16.2	948	7.2
>6,999	3,921	29.8	1,622	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,176</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,478</b>	<b>49.2</b>

Note: As of June 1, 2020 all State employees were converted to Bi-Weekly pay schedules. The Monthly Base Salary is calculated as follows: Bi-Weekly Pay Period Rate x 26 / 12.



### Department of Administration

The Department of Administration (“DOA”) gained over 150 permanent, full time employees in the last three years. Acting Commissioner Amanda Holland reported that the vast majority of these were a result of its consolidation with the Office of Information Technology and Shared Services. However, due to the nature of the consolidation, the department’s ability to focus on external minority and female recruitment for these positions was limited. The department saw a decrease in female employees, dropping 4.1% into 2018, with 0.3% drops in each of the following two years. Even with these declines, Administration’s female employees represent 54.1% of the Department, which is better than the overall 46.2% of civilian female workers in Alaska. Despite the recruitment limitations, the department was able to maintain its upward trend in minority employment with a 4.1% increase from 2017 to 29.6% total in 2020. This is still off from the statewide statistic of 34.6% of Alaskans in the civilian workforce being minorities.

The Department of Administration is extremely diverse in its functions, housing such agencies as the Division of Motor Vehicles, the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (including the state’s EEO program), the Public Defender Agency, the Office of Public Advocacy, and the Office of Information Technology. The department centralizes services in the areas of IT, Finance and Shared Services (purchasing, leasing and facilities, surplus property, and central mail).

Administration continuously strives to improve employee diversity and workforce quality. Vacant personnel positions tend to attract more female applicants. Historically, the department has not been as well represented in female executives as it could be.

Efforts are underway to continue to improve minority and female representation at all levels. In attempting to

improve team efficiency, the department broadened its mindset regarding qualifications in what constitutes a qualified candidate. Rather than solely relying upon “hard skills” and minimum qualifications for a position, hiring managers are assessing applicants holistically by looking for “soft skills” that complement a work team, such as behavioral skills and other valuable characteristics and traits, that promote a healthy respectful work environment. Managers can train for gaps in hard skills such as using the personnel database software. By expanding the hiring criteria, the overall team will function more cohesively and thus, efficiently. With HR consolidation, these practices are being applied to other departments as well.

One of the barriers to employing more Alaska Native peoples continues to be competition from Alaska Native corporations, which are often employers of choice. Partnerships forged with Native entities during the last assessment period will hopefully increase Alaska Native representation.

Acting Commissioner Holland would like to see more females in executive and leadership positions. She also wants to implement an automated system that enables the Division of Personnel to automatically generate an EEO report monthly and send it to the leadership of each department/division so they can consistently track EEO hiring and recruitment/retention progress in approximate “real time.” This will likely be implemented for the upcoming fiscal year. This will also introduce a strategic workforce management plan, which will include employee diversity as an integrated intentional plan. Additionally, the department is moving forward with creating a “sneak peek” as a recruitment tool to show an applicant what a person’s employment life may look like while working for the state. In that vein, the department is creating an online employee onboarding system to make that process intuitive and more efficient. ◆

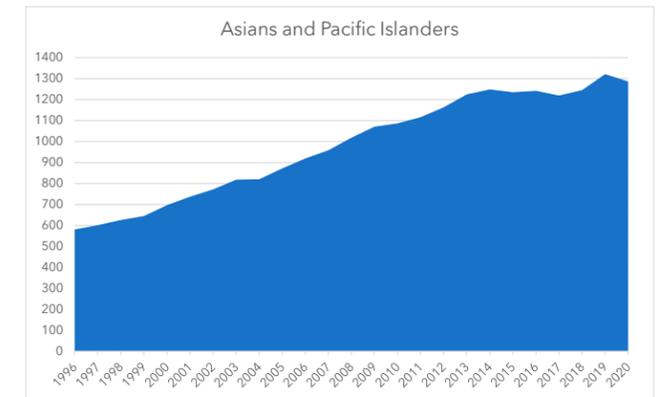
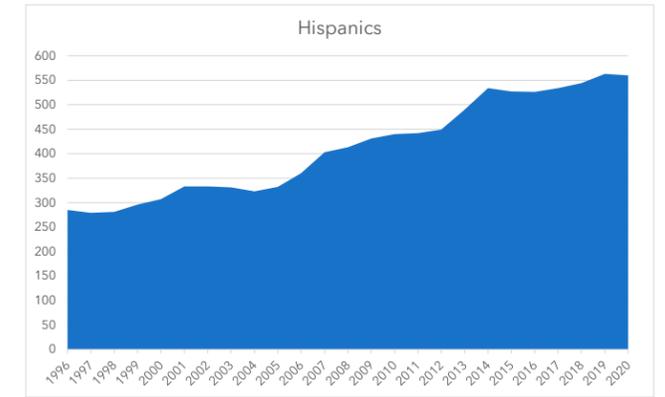
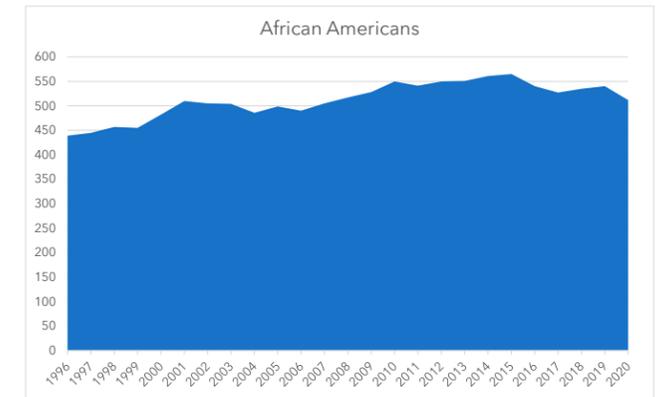
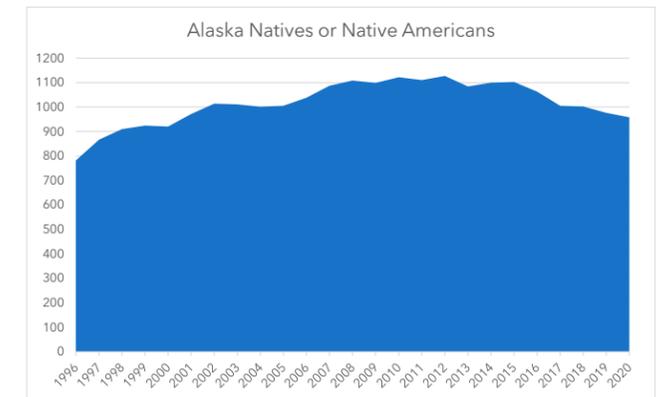
### Alaska Native Employment in the Executive Branch of Alaska State Government 1996-2020+

Year	Number of Alaska Natives Employed	Percentage of Total Workforce
1996	642	4.7
1997	644	4.8
1998	684	5.0
1999	703	5.2
2000	702	5.1
2001	758	5.3
2002	794	5.4
2003	808	5.6
2004	798	5.5
2005	809	5.5
2006	837	5.6
2007	885	5.8
2008	903	5.8
2009	893	5.7
2010	916	5.8
2011	903	5.7
2012	910	5.7
2013	875	5.4
2014	893	5.5
2014 FYE	883	5.5
2015	896	5.7
2016	871	5.8
2017	1,005	6.8
2018	1,002	6.9
2019	976	6.7
2020	958	6.7

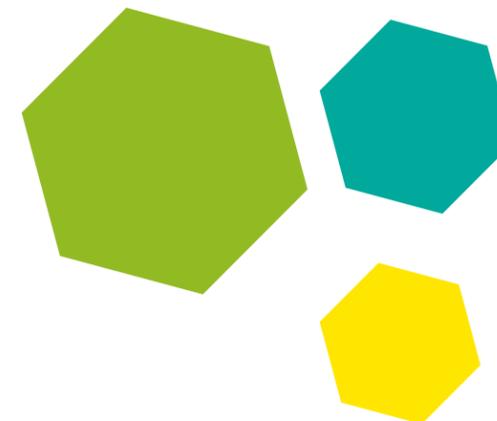
Note: Data prior to 2014 was calculated using 12/31 of each year; in the 2017 report, data is calculated using the fiscal year end (FYE) date of 6/30 for each year, beginning with a recalculation of 2014. New EEO race categories are captured in the IRIS HRM payroll system implemented effective 1/9/17; Alaska Native and American Indian or Native American are now combined into one category.

+Permanent Full-time, Permanent Part-time, Permanent Full-time and Part-time Seasonal

### Minorities Employed by the State of Alaska 1996-2020\*+



\*Note: Data prior to 2014 was calculated using 12/31 of each year; in the 2017 report, data is calculated using the fiscal year end (FYE) date of 6/30 for each year, beginning with a recalculation of 2014.  
+Permanent Full-time, Permanent Part-time, Permanent Full-time and Part-time Seasonal





## Department of Fish & Game

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (“ADF&G”) continues to be unique in that it is more likely to change emphasis depending on the commissioner in charge than other departments within the state. Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang (joined by HR Business Partner Stacie Bentley and Deputy Operations Manager Melissa Hill), who worked in the department for over three decades before being appointed as the commissioner, said that many affirmative action programs tend to be dropped during these transitions. Such was the case during the last assessment period with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (“ANSEP”), at the University of Alaska, which works with students from middle school through graduate school to foster an interest in skills valuable to ADF&G. The program’s goal was to increase the numbers of Alaska Natives in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (“STEM”). ADF&G sponsored the program until 2016, when it succumbed to budget cuts. Although budgetary restrictions limit the amount of direct financial contributions the department can make to ANSEP, Commissioner Vincent-Lang has re-engaged with the program, discussing departmental needs and the potential for training candidates.

However, even those minorities who obtain eligible degrees have little economic incentive to work for ADF&G. In addition to competing with the federal government, which generally provides higher salaries and overall compensation packages, ANSEP graduates are generally drawn to Alaska Native corporations where they can make more money in land management. ADF&G’s efforts to hire and train minorities often result in those qualified employees leaving state service after obtaining relevant work experience and vesting in the retirement plan because they can make more money working for other employers.

Although ADF&G has the lowest numbers of minority full time employees at only 10.4%, it did continue its growth trend by gaining 1.4% during this assessment period.<sup>3</sup> As noted above, the 2019 Alaskan civilian labor force is 34.6% minority. The department also saw continued growth of 2.6% in female employment since FY2017, culminating in 45.2% of ADF&G employees being female at the end of FY2020. The department believes the increase in female employment flows from having more females in leadership positions, including a female deputy commissioner.

<sup>3</sup> ADF&G reported 9.0% of its workforce identified as non-white during the previous assessment period as written in ASCHR’s 2017 Annual Report.



Commissioner Vincent-Lang and his team explained that because field work is science based, a college degree is often required. This has a limiting effect on the number of all applicants including minority applicants.<sup>4</sup> This limited qualified applicant pool continues to create recruitment challenges.

Although there is no formal EEO process, there is a cultural appreciation of the need for a diverse and inclusive workforce. The department has tried to hire more policy-related positions that do not necessarily require a science

<sup>4</sup> Per the National Center for Education Statistics Annual Report on Status Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, Indicator 26: STEM Degrees for the academic year 2015-2016, only 18% of bachelor’s degrees were in STEM fields of those 36% were awarded to females. Additionally, “the percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Asian students that were STEM degrees (33%) was almost double the overall percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded in STEM fields. The percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded to students of two or more races that were STEM degrees (20%) was also higher than the overall percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded in STEM fields. In contrast, the percentages of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Hispanic (15%), Pacific Islander (15%), American Indian/Alaska Native (14%), and Black students (12%) that were STEM degrees were lower than the overall percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded in STEM fields. The percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded to white students that were STEM degrees (18%) was about the same as the overall percentage of bachelor’s degrees awarded in STEM fields. See [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator\\_reg.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_reg.asp)

degree to address ADF&G’s lack of racial diversity, as well as address its historically male-dominated work environment. Although not all necessarily department employees, today there is a team of high-profile women representing the state and leading the policy charge for all fisheries management within 200 miles of the coastline.

In addition to the above, the department’s recent efforts include focusing on EEO issues within its immediate control, such as creating a Respectful Workplace Committee. The committee facilitates discussion about diversity, inclusion, and changing workplace cultures where appropriate. The department is also expanding its sexual harassment training program and updating its standard operating procedures for EEO compliance, including sexual harassment complaints. Commissioner Vincent-Lang pointed out that there are two factors in the minority and female EEO numbers: recruitment, and retention. While creating a respectful workplace in which coworkers feel trusted is something that can be addressed internally, much of recruitment and retention is outside of ADF&G’s control (such as female and minority science graduates, and competition with other employers recruiting from the same talent pool with similar EEO goals). ♦



### Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation (“DOT”), represented by Commissioner John MacKinnon and Deputy Commissioner Rob Carpenter, continued to see an upward trend in minority hire resulting in a 2.9% increase since the last assessment, ending FY2020 at 21.8%. DOT’s minority hire numbers are roughly in the middle of other state departments. DOT continued to see an upward trend in female hires, a gain of 0.7% since 2017. However, DOT again had the lowest percentage of female employees ending FY2020 at 25.5%.

Commissioner McKinnon explained the department has extreme difficulties in recruiting overall. In general, DOT has an attrition rate of approximately 10%, which Deputy Commissioner Carpenter stated was higher than average for state government. As with many departments, DOT finds itself on the losing end of the competition as far as financial incentives and comprehensive compensation packages are concerned. The department explained that both the federal government and the Municipality of Anchorage have larger compensation packages and that employees come for training and then leave for more lucrative positions. Sometimes employees stay for only a matter of months before leaving for other government employers, and that it is not uncommon for union equipment operators to refuse DOT jobs because of the low pay. The department also explained that the job classification system, as well as traditional “minimum qualifications,” have hindered the hiring of otherwise qualified individuals. However, the department also

explained that DOT’s recruitment and retention issues are not unique to Alaska as other state transportation departments are facing nearly identical challenges.

Employee recruitment and retention issues for some positions led DOT to rely more heavily on third-party consultants, who often have more flexibility in who they hire and may have an easier time achieving EEO goals. At least 50% of a road project’s budget is spent on consultants to address public participation requirements. Overall, DOT’s central region relies 70% on consultants, whereas the other two regions rely roughly 50% on consultants.

Much of DOT funding is passed through to contractors. The department recently participated in a disparity study related to minority owned contractor and subcontractor businesses. Due to Alaska’s geographic location it is effectively isolated, and unlike the contiguous states, Alaska’s DOT is forced to consider only what is available in state. Similarly, the department acknowledges the underrepresentation of Alaska Natives in state jobs. Most of DOT’s positions are in metropolitan and suburban areas, as well as along the rail-belt, whereas approximately half of Alaska Native peoples live in rural parts of the state. Obligations in rural areas are handled through contracts with local community members and businesses rather than direct state employment, and although the department did not have statistical data, it assumes that Alaska Natives make up a significant share of the recipients of the rural maintenance contracts such as for plowing and grading. ♦

### Department of Revenue

The Department of Revenue (“DOR”), represented by Commissioner Lucinda Mahoney, Deputy Commissioner Mike Barnhill, and Administrative Services Director (“ASD”) Brian Fechter, continued its upward trend in minority employment gaining 1.2% over the last three years and making it one of the top minority employers in state government at 29.0%. DOR saw a 1.9% gain in FY2019 followed by a 0.3% gain in FY2020, but this was offset by a 0.9% loss in 2018. Despite exhibiting a slight downward trend losing 1.6% of its female employees from FY2017 to FY2020, the department still managed to maintain 60.6% female employees. The department could not attribute the slight changes to any one event or initiative. This is not so unusual and is on par with national statistics. Revenue is proud of its nearly all female management team. In addition to the Commissioner, the entire tax management team and all directors, except for the Administrative Services Director, are all female. The department believes more women are seeking positions in financial services and government jobs to advance their careers.

DOR expressed many of the same concerns as other departments: it is constrained by state policies for pay scales and the inflexibility of “minimum qualifications.” The department identified competition with Alaska Native corporations and other large employers as some of the barriers to increasing minority employee numbers. However, Commissioner Mahoney believes that DOR’s compensation is comparable to the private sector for both entry-level and mid-tier positions. The department also cited relatively inflexible qualifications in the classified positions that limit some recruitment efforts, but also noted that some specialized positions have educational requirements and/or certifications. Notwithstanding the above, one recent success was the removal of the Bachelor of Accounting as a minimum qualification for an accounting technician job; the removal allowed the department to recruit people with relevant work experience but may have less formal accounting education. DOR expects to continue working with the Department of Administration to improve recruiting people of color, particularly Alaska Native peoples. ♦

### Department of Environmental Conservation

For the Department of Environmental Conservation (“DEC”), ASCHR staff interviewed Commissioner Jason Brune, Deputy Commissioner Emma Pokon, and HR Business Manager Brian Blessington. DEC continued its upward trend in female hires gaining 3.7% since FY2017, ending FY2020 at 58.0% female. DEC is closer to the middle of the pack for its minority employee rates, and despite experiencing a downward trend losing 0.2% since 2018, the department is still generally trending up with a net 1.9% increase since FY2017, ending FY2020 at 18.6%.

DEC’s leadership team consists mostly of women: the deputy commissioner, two special projects assistants, four out of five directors, and the public information officer. Additionally, 80% of the Commissioner’s executive office team is female, and the department is striving to “look like Alaska” by increasing its minority workforce. Commissioner Brune indicated he wants to increase the Alaska Native employee rate, particularly in land management and permitting. Due to the university’s financial requirement, ANSEP is not a viable option currently. Due to private sector financial incentives that DEC cannot match and other programmatic concerns, DEC has no internships. The department is exploring other less expensive minority outreach avenues that will not require programmatic cuts.

Commissioner Brune expressed many of the same concerns as other departments: it is constrained by compensation packages and minimum qualifications. Employees with technical expertise sometimes start their careers at DEC to obtain training, and then move to the higher paying positions in the private sector. Commissioner Brune also expressed some dismay at losing its scientific employees to other departments when higher level positions become available and suggested that the state may want to consider its STEM needs holistically across departments.

The commissioner has a goal to cut DEC’s turnover rate in half by investing in and developing DEC’s current employees, which can include simple initiatives like incentivizing employees to obtain additional training and education. As part of DEC’s recruitment and retention efforts, the department recently required every employee to create a career development plan, with measurable goals, even if those goals include leaving state service at some point. The commissioner believes that the focus on an individual employee, and helping employees achieve their personal goals, can be a factor in causing an employee to continue state employment.

Another goal is to eliminate some of the department’s



division “silos” and create a multi-division hiring team. This would increase diversity within the hiring committee, as well as promote a more diverse workplace. The department is also extremely cognizant of the opportunities that the pandemic has brought related to

## Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

The Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (“DCCED”), represented by Commissioner Julie Anderson, Deputy Commissioner Amy Demboski, and ASD Micaela Fowler, continued its upward trend in minority hires, gaining 1.8% since the end of FY2017, and remains in the middle of state government employers with 22.6% minority employees at the end of FY2020. Although the department saw a 3.4% decrease in female employment since 2018, a 2.3% increase from 2017 to 2018 substantially offset the loss, leaving DCCED with a 57.6% female workforce at the end of FY2020. Commissioner Anderson anecdotally reported that 80% of the department’s leaders are female, particularly including some of the department’s higher paid positions, and approximately 25-30% of her immediate executive leadership team is Alaska Native; this is higher than the

## Department of Health & Social Services

ASCHR interviewed Department of Health and Social Services (“DHSS”) Commissioner Adam Crum, ASD Sylvan Robb, and HR Business Partner Chad Bolduc. The DHSS is one of the most diverse departments in the state and is becoming even more so. They are one of the highest in total female employees with 68.4% of their full-time positions filled by women. In addition, they have the highest rate in the state of full-time minority employees at 34.6%, which is the only department to mirror the 34.6% civilian minority workforce in Alaska. While the department is justifiably proud of these achievements, it still sees room for improvement.

The department experienced a slight dip of 1.3% from FY2019 in its minority employee numbers. The dip is attributed to a vendor contract related to the Pioneer Home management where many of the Pioneer Home employees were minorities. The contractor retained virtually every employee, but this still reflected negatively on DHSS’s minority employee percentage.

During the last assessment period, the department indicated its interview processes may need amending to consider distinct Native cultural norms. The department continues to be cognizant of the importance of inclusivity, including finding people in local communities who can do the work in a culturally sensitive and culturally appreciative manner. DHSS has taken a holistic approach to the hiring

teleworking. Approximately 80-85% of DEC employees are working from home, and that brings the ability to recruit talent from anywhere a person has connectivity, which could increase minority employment rates. ♦

minority percentage for the rest of the department.

Like other departments, Commerce is encouraged by the pandemic’s demonstration of the success for remote hiring and teleworking as it revealed recruitment opportunities in rural Alaska with a “work where you live” mindset. The department is working closely with DOA to identify potential barriers to rural Alaskans. For example, some union contracts require jobs to have a specified location, and there are questions on how to address regional pay differentials.

The department would like to see further progress made on holistic hiring by considering necessary skills and abilities over minimum qualifications because it may further assist the department to achieve its EEO goals. ♦



process and emphasized its ongoing efforts both to ensure everyone has an equal chance to apply for a job, and to encourage hiring managers to employ diverse hiring panels.

A new initiative is being implemented by the Office of Children’s Services (“OCS”), where the bulk of employees are Professional Services Specialists. OCS is partnering with tribal partners in a centralized recruitment initiative to help employ more Alaska Native people by, for example, reviewing recommended interview questions to eliminate biased questions like “explain why you are the best candidate for the opening.” DHSS is sensitive to the fact that some people cannot comfortably answer because some cultures discourage personal boasting or vanity. Additionally, DHSS has begun including tribal representatives on these interview panels. The department also intends to incorporate the lessons it is learning from other departments.

With the larger HR consolidation, the department is also embracing the shift from minimum qualifications to competency-based evaluations, as well as increasing hiring manager authority to select “the best candidate.” One area that may need additional consideration is job classification across departments because not all competency-based criteria is uniformly transferable, nor will it necessarily fit all divisions within a given department. There may be some additional consideration from the employee unions as competency-based hiring criteria are developed and implemented. Although the ASCHR evaluation involves a somewhat limited dataset, DHSS volunteered that in its own EEO progress report, it has more black, indigenous, and people of color in service and maintenance positions, and eliminating the minimum qualifications should allow for greater internal advancement when jobs can be performed without a degree.

The department identified some barriers to hiring additional Alaska Native employees, including competition

## Department of Corrections

From FY2017 to FY2020, the Department of Corrections (“DOC”) showed a decrease in female employment by 0.6% for a total of 37.3%. However, DOC remains toward the bottom of female employment rates. It has exhibited a slow steady downward trend over the last three years, dropping a tiny fraction of female employees each year. Regarding minority hires, the department has continued its upward trend increasing minority employment by 0.6% between FY2017 and FY2020 for a total of 23.3%; in particular, it saw a 1% jump since 2018. It is in the middle when compared to other departments. Neither Commissioner Nancy Dahlstrom nor Deputy Commissioner Kelly Goode had any particularized reason for either trend.

Recruitment and addressing attrition are always a priority. Given employee attrition and the washout rate for applicants, DOC is more focused on finding qualified people rather than targeting EEO goals. The department recently created a dedicated recruitment unit that is looking for opportunities to reach new demographics. Additionally, DOC broadened its recruitment advertising by incorporating Internet-based recruitment services such as Monster.com and Indeed.com.

The department is hopeful that a regulatory change suggested by the Alaska Police Standards Council will have a positive impact on the department’s minority hire levels. Previously, people from American Samoa could not be sworn DOC officers in the State of Alaska due to their status as non-citizen U.S. nationals. Therefore, the

from the Alaska Native corporations, which tend to offer higher compensation packages, and social incentives for working for one’s own, a friend’s, or a relative’s corporation. State positions also frequently conflict with seasonal traditional needs such as hunting and/or fishing. The department is, however, optimistic that telecommuting may open opportunities to hire a more diverse workforce with the ability to hire in locations that do not have a state office of any kind. The department is working with the DOA and evaluating potential financial savings related to a reduced office footprint, offset by potential pay differential costs, and other potential financial expenditures needed to implement greater telecommuting. The department understands that it is relatively new to telework, and that a shift away from the mindset of needing to be physically present in an office to supervise and conduct business efficiently is evolving. DHSS is also sensitive to the need for it to be flexible so it can not only remain inclusive but achieve its mission. ♦

department has turned away numerous Samoans. DOC expects several qualified Samoans to reapply to the department assuming the regulation is promulgated.

In addition to a female Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, three of the four directors are also women. Deputy Commissioner Goode hopes that their nearly all-female leadership team will encourage women to apply for vacancies. Although the department may never reach parity with Alaska’s 46.2% female civilian workforce given the applicant pool’s male to female ratio, the department is making efforts to recruit women. To that end, 7 of the 37 recent academy graduates going into sworn positions were women. This is the largest percentage of female officers coming from a DOC academy in many years.

The department identified several barriers it has for recruitment in general, including the overall compensation package. Although probation officers are sworn officers, they are paid less than police officers, including the Alaska State Troopers. DOC also explained that both compensation packages for administrative professionals, and a lack of apparent career path due to limited internal advancement opportunities outside of standard longevity merit increases, are contributing to attrition. The department often sees its administrative professionals receive an introduction to state service and training, and then leave for other departments when mid-level administrative positions are open.

Regarding Alaska Native hire, the department makes

efforts to hire probation and parole officers from the communities where the officer will be based, particularly if it is a rural community. However, the department rarely has local community residents apply for these positions. Deputy Commissioner Goode mentioned the higher rate

### Department of Natural Resources

Commission staff interviewed Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) Commissioner Corri Feige, Deputy Commissioner Sara Longan, and ASD Cheri Lowenstein. At the department’s request, the state’s EEO program manager Camille Brill also participated. Despite a net loss of 63 employees, DNR’s minority hires trended up, gaining 1.7%. Commissioner Feige recognizes that at 11.8% total at the end of FY2020, the department’s overall minority employment is low compared to the minority civilian labor workforce in Alaska at 34.6%, and that DNR lags most other state departments. She suggested that much of DNR’s workforce is technical with positions requiring certain science degrees, significantly limiting the hiring pool. Partnering with industry to encourage and recruit young people in high school and at the University of Alaska into STEM careers is an avenue the department is considering.

The Department saw small swings up from 47.5% females at the end of FY2017 to 49.0% in FY2018, followed by a 2.7% dip and another 2.5% increase, putting it at 48.8% in FY2020, which is 2.6% higher than the female civilian workforce in Alaska. The Commissioner believed the female employee rates are good and reflect DNR’s culture and female leadership. The Commissioner wants to send a message to the employees that DNR has an open culture that is accepting to all, and therefore appeals to a diverse population.

DNR also recognizes the value of investing in its own people, and that succession planning can result in greater diversity. To that end, the department initiated a Leadership Summit Program, wherein division directors identify standout employees, who are nominated into the

of incarceration, specifically of Alaska Natives, noting that if a person sees a higher percentage of family and community members *incarcerated* and/or their lives *managed* by DOC, there is probably less social incentive to want to work for DOC. ♦

Leadership Summit Program. There, the employees are exposed to numerous working aspects of the department, across divisions, to show these top employees a holistic picture of DNR that is often only seen by the department’s leadership team. In addition to identifying potential leaders, the program promotes accountability and encourages employees to take ownership of the department.

Commissioner Feige also explained that the department faces stiff competition from Alaska Native corporations for qualified Natives, particularly in land and resource management. One initiative that the department is strongly supporting will enable the department to rebuild village-based firefighting crews. Currently, there is a requirement that wildland firefighters have a physical, which must be conducted by a qualified provider—of which none exist in rural Alaska. Allowing the physicals to be performed by the local providers will naturally rebuild the rural wildland firefighting workforce and associated academies, and is likely to increase Alaska Native employment.

The department is also looking at long-term telecommuting options based on successes found during the pandemic, along with implementing rotating schedules. The nature of DNR’s work does not necessarily facilitate telecommuting throughout the job classes but providing a work-life balance will lead to more satisfied employees, which will be longer-term employees. The department made significant pandemic-related telecommuting investments along with employee training investments and is cognizant that it doesn’t want either of these investments wasted. ♦

### Department of Education and Early Development

The Department of Education and Early Development (“DEED”) has one of the highest rates of female employees at 68.2%, and this number has been steadily trending upward by over 1% per year for the last three years. The high percentage of female employees is likely reflective of the high percentage of females who obtain teaching certificates. Minority employment rates also trended upward, but much more slowly, growing only by 1.6% total from 2017 to 2020, ending FY2020 at 19.1%. DEED’s statistics are similar to national statistics: the nation’s education force is still mainly female and there are few people of color. This may account for why, despite having increased minority representation by 1.5% over the past three years, the department is still underrepresented in minority employment.

Commissioner Michael Johnson and Human Resources Director Bobi Jo Grimes, joined by ASD Lacey Sanders, expressed many of the same concerns as other departments. DEED is constrained by state policies for pay scales. Many of the positions within DEED require a teaching certificate, a bachelor’s or master’s degree that must be education focused, or a specific history, archival, or library sciences degree. This creates a barrier to entry. Those that do qualify can most likely obtain higher benefits and pay working in a school district rather than for the state. When trying to hire Alaska Natives, the state is not typically an employer of choice when an otherwise qualified archivist or librarian can often work for their own tribe, corporation, or home community. However, this has not prevented DEED from developing and continuing programs in recruitment and outreach.

The Division of Libraries created a diversity and inclusion committee that is looking for partnerships to create pathways for people of color through scholarships, training, and other initiatives. Similarly, the department is working to have more Alaskans become teachers so that Alaska’s educators reflect the whole state population. This is being accomplished through performance scholarships to encourage residents to look at education as a career. A more diverse teaching pool will naturally create more diversity within DEED’s workforce.



Commissioner Johnson cited Governor Dunleavy’s initiative to create a teacher retention working group. There is a national teacher shortage that is exacerbated in Alaska. Currently, two-thirds of Alaska’s newly hired teachers come from other states, and they do not reflect the race and culture of the students they serve. The issue is so pressing one school district was recently forced to hire all its new teachers from the Philippines.

To address some of these pressures, the Board of Education created a tribal compacting subcommittee to further goals of having the educator/administrator population reflect that of the community. DEED recently opened an Anchorage office, breaking with its history of having all employees in Juneau. The department serves vastly different districts with different needs across the state, but until very recently *all* department employees were in Juneau. The department believes that the move will broaden the applicant pool and thereby increase its minority employment percentage as Anchorage has one of the most diverse census areas in the nation.

DEED is also evaluating telework as an opportunity to hire a more diverse workforce, and recently hired statewide coordinator positions based in Haines and Delta where there are no state education offices. The ability to expand teleworking for DEED will encourage children in remote communities to pursue similar careers in their communities.

Commissioner Johnson discussed tribal compacting, and its ability as an external force to ultimately influence internal hiring and EEO data. The department is exploring initiatives for further Alaska Native management in public education. The department is actively building relationships with Native organizations while actively pursuing Alaska Native and American Indian peoples by tailored advertising directly to the Alaska Native community through non-state hiring websites such as [alaskanativehire.com](http://alaskanativehire.com) and [nativehire.org](http://nativehire.org). ♦

## Department of Law

The Department of Law (“Law”) has consistently seen its female employee percentage grow a very small amount over each of the last three years, gaining 0.2% total. The department’s overall female employee percentage in FY2020 is the highest at 67.2%. The department is committed to not only hiring females, but also promoting/hiring females into leadership positions, and it currently has many women leading department offices.

Despite a decrease of 0.7% in minority employment in FY2018, the department has continued its overall upward trend in minority hire over the last three years as well, increasing from 18.0% in FY2017 to 20.2% at the end of FY2020. The department recognizes that its 20.2% minority employee rate likely reflects lower level staff positions rather than more highly compensated attorneys.

ASCHR staff interviewed Attorney General Treg Taylor, Criminal Deputy Attorney General John Skidmore, Criminal Division Director Jack McKenna, Civil Division Director Joanne Grace, and ASD Amber LeBlanc. Law has difficulty recruiting for all positions, and often the need to fulfill statutory mandates takes priority over EEO goals because the nature of the department’s work always requires it to be reasonably staffed. Additionally, a national decrease in law school graduates interested in public service pose challenges to recruiting attorneys. Private sector jobs provide a better compensation package than what is available at the state.

These challenges encouraged the department to broadly examine its recruitment practices. Although funding has not been secured, the department is attempting to initiate a targeted program to recruit seasoned sexual assault prosecutors from other states. As part of the program, the department envisions retaining an outside agency capable of performing the recruitment, which will increase the qualified applicant pool, including both the qualified female and minority applicant pools.

Additionally, Law volunteered some ideas to expand minority representation throughout the department including targeting historically black colleges and universities, as well as examining whether there are law schools that tend to attract a greater percentage of Alaska Native and other indigenous peoples. ASCHR recommended Law start by examining law schools with strong Indian law programs such as the University of Arizona and contacting the Native American Law Students Association.

The department is also looking at long-term strategies such as developing and strengthening broad community support for the Department of Law’s mission. The department believes that if its attorneys can integrate into Alaska’s rural communities in a culturally sensitive manner, not only will all of Alaska’s peoples be positively served, but children who are curious about public service and law enforcement will be encouraged to pursue such a legal career. ♦

## Governor’s Office

The Office of the Governor consists not only of the Governor’s and Lt. Governor’s immediate executive staffs and the Office of Management and Budget, but also employees in the Division of Elections under the Lt. Governor, the Administrative Services Division, and the professional staff of ASCHR itself, all three of which do not necessarily share the same turnover which commonly occurs within the Governor’s executive staff after an election.

Despite a downward trend in minority hire during the last fiscal year, the office maintained its general upward trend with 24.4% minority employees in FY2020, up from FY2017’s 23.3%. While this number is below the statewide minority civilian workforce of 34.6%, the Governor’s Office is reflective of the average across state departments. The Commission staff interviewed Acting Chief of Staff



Randy Ruaro and ASD Shawn Henderson, who spoke generally about the Governor’s executive staff rather than the Division of Elections or ASCHR. The Governor’s Office did not attribute the changes to any one thing, noting hiring practices have remained consistent even between administrations in looking only for the most highly qualified candidates.

The office saw a downward trend in female employees during this assessment period, losing 5.1%. The Governor’s Office ended the three-year assessment period with 64.7% female employees. Despite the decrease, the Governor’s Office is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest government employer of women by percentage. Again, the office had no particularized reason for this trend. It fills positions based upon a person’s qualifications and performance. The office has

no specialized plan(s) to increase the amount of either minority or female hires in the next three years. Rather, it will continue to encourage all qualified individuals to apply for advertised positions.

Due to the nature of the executive staff needing a high degree of regular personal interaction, interaction with constituents, interaction with legislators, and interaction with agency commissioners and staff, it is unlikely that



## Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (“DMVA”) is a 95% military (non-civilian) workforce. However, this assessment considers only the DMVA state employees. DMVA continued its upward trend in minority hire, gaining an impressive 5.8% since FY2017 for a total minority workforce of 27.9%, placing it among the top of the state departments in FY2020; DMVA realized a 3.3% gain between 2018 and 2019 alone. The department, represented by Adjutant General Torrence Saxe, HR Business Manager Carolina Russel, and ASD Stephanie Richard, attributed this trend to a recruitment measure implemented at the beginning of the current administration. This measure is designed to mirror a federal hiring mandate which requires a hiring panel, when interviewing a minority, to include a person of the applicant’s race on the hiring panel. Due to the limited state workforce at DMVA, this is not always possible, but DMVA recognizes that how the department recruits impacts who the department recruits. The Commissioner believes the department should reflect the makeup of Alaska.

The department also started identifying its hiring panels, and requiring those potential interviewers to submit questions, at the time the vacancy is posted. Not only is the HR Business Manager able to screen the questions for legality, the department is better able to eliminate bias and prevent favoritism. In addition to seeing its minority hiring numbers increase, the department reports that its EEO related complaints decreased after the recruitment/promotion initiative was implemented. During that same timeframe, DMVA also moved to have as many employees as possible participate in the state’s Respectful Workplace Training, hosting approximately six classes with 18-25 employees attending each class; given how small DMVA’s state workforce is, these classes encompassed a significant

telecommuting provides much of an opportunity in looking to increase minority or Alaska Native hire. ASCHR notes that based upon its experience with nearly the entire staff telecommuting during the pandemic, it is considering the viability of opening future investigator positions for statewide recruitment, which could not only increase its minority and rural hire, but could supplant the historic closure of regional offices. ♦

portion of the department’s civilian employees.

The department saw an overall drop in female employees during the last three years, losing 0.9% since FY2017 resulting in 33.5% female employees in the department at the end of FY2020. The department has a difficult time finding any candidate regardless of the candidate’s race or sex due to the specialized skills required. DMVA also pointed out that approximately one-third of its workforce is in fields that traditionally have been male-dominated jobs, e.g., labor, trades, and crafts, and as such males comprise the bulk of the applicant pool. Additionally, there are several positions at Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) for which sex is an occupational qualification: the AMYA applicants themselves favor males to females by a 2:1 ratio, which means that AMYA employees are required to skew 2:1 male to female as well.

The department values its relationship with the labor unions represented within it. Building strong healthy relationships helps with DMVA’s EEO strategic planning, as well as with efforts to provide an inclusive harassment-free work environment.

In addressing efforts to increase Alaska Native hire, the department is seeking to implement a recommendation that was made at a Bethel townhall to have more DMVA positions in rural communities. To the extent that DMVA can expand those kinds of opportunities and place telework-eligible positions in places outside of the population centers, it recognizes that it may naturally further increase its Alaska Native and minority employment rate. ♦



### Department of Labor

ASCHR was not able to interview anyone from the Department of Labor. The department saw a marked increase in its minority hiring from 2017, gaining 3.9% and ending FY2020 with 25.2% of its workforce being minorities. The department saw slight changes year over year for female employees both increasing and decreasing,

but ended FY2020 with 65.9% female employees, which still represents a 1.2% net increase even while losing 52 total employees. It is worth noting that Dr. Tamika Ledbetter, the Commissioner, is a minority as well as female. ♦

### Department of Public Safety

Due to the very recent appointment of Commissioner James Cockrell, the Department of Public Safety was unable to accommodate an interview within ASCHR's timeframe. The department is toward the bottom in both minority and female hiring, coming third to last in both categories. While the department saw a small uptick in minority hires into 2018, its trend continues decreasing,

losing 1.1% from 2017 to 2020 while only losing eleven total employees. Although the department saw a 0.7% increase in female employees into 2018 followed by a 1.8% increase in female employees into 2019, it lost 0.7% the following year, ending FY2020 with 34.0% female employees, which is still a 1.8% gain from 2017, indicating a generally upward trend. ♦

## Recommendations

Recurring themes emerged throughout the interviews. Based on the themes, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights makes the following recommendations:

- Continue reviewing minimum qualifications and application requirements to seek out creative alternatives in hiring minority and female candidates.
- Consider tracking state STEM employees and holistically reviewing the government's STEM needs, including centralizing contact for ANSEP.
- Review the state's system of compensation to determine the feasibility of a more competitive environment to attract a diverse pool of qualified candidates, particularly in jobs requiring advanced education or particular certifications, as those minority and female candidates are also being pursued by private sector employers who also have EEO goals.
- Establish a program of shared resources for employee recruitment such as shared job fairs and referring candidates for openings in other state departments for which they may be better qualified.
- Conduct statewide hiring manager cultural awareness training for interviewing and recruiting Alaska Natives.
- Review position descriptions to encourage telecommuting eligible positions and open these jobs to any resident of Alaska. Including rural residents in larger applicant pools which will naturally add more minority and particularly Alaska Native candidates as state employees. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that a large percentage of the Alaska workforce, including state government employees, can function perfectly in telecommuting situations. A study from the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research from June of 2020 found that 42% of the U.S.

labor workforce was working from home, accounting for more than two-thirds of the nation's economic activity, while only 26% were working at their business's premises, primarily as essential workers.<sup>5</sup> All employers should anticipate that employees who have now spent a year or more working from home will expect greater workplace flexibility as COVID-19 related emergency orders are lifted; employers who are not willing to meet these expectations upon calling employees back to the office should anticipate a departure of employees to workplaces that are willing to accommodate greater flexibility and telecommuting schedules, and who will see this as an opportunity to achieve EEO goals.

- Eliminate barriers to work/ life balance (particularly for caregivers) in the workplace by encouraging implementation of flex schedules, hybrid telecommuting situations where office visits are necessary, and other tactics that maximize parenting time along with workplace productivity. Where compensation packages may be stressed by larger state budgetary requirements, the state may be able to recruit and retain more minority and female candidates with other less-tangible benefits; in particular accounting for time needed to pursue traditional seasonal hunting and gathering activities could promote an increase in Alaska Native state employees. ♦

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Bloom, Stanford Institute for Economic and Policy Research, How working from home works out (June, 2020), available at <https://siepr.stanford.edu/research/publications/how-working-home-works-out>.

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